

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 EUR-12 OMB-01 /087 W
-----190335Z 108711 /63

R 181300Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9520
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMCONSUL IBADAN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0557

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, DM
SUBJ: BENIN COUP ATTEMPT AFTERMATH: INTERNAL SECURITY

REF: A. COTONOU 0396, B. COTONOU 0439 C. COTONOU 0540
D. COTONOU 0310

SUMMARY: ARRESTS OF BENINESE CONTINUE. SITUATION IN COTONOU
CALM DESPITE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN. ELEMENTS OF COUP ATTEMPT
FIFTH COLUMN REVEALED. END SUMMARY.

1. AS GPRB PROPAGANDA APPARATUS CONTINUES ITS SATURATION
REBROADCAST OF OFFICIAL STATEMENT NAMING CONSPIRING COUNTRIES
(REF C), ARRESTS OF POTENTIAL ANTI-REGIME BENINESE CONTINUE.
MOST NOTABLE IS THAT OF EMILE PARAISO, FORMER MINISTER OF
PUBLIC WORKS IN PREVIOUS REGIMES AND CURRENTLY DIRECTOR OF
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WATER AND POWER SERVICE. PARAISO IS RESPECTED,
CAPABLE TECHNICIAN, BUT APPARENTLY HAS BECOME SUSPECT AS
RESULT OF HIS BACKGROUND (BRESILANO FROM OUIDAH) AND FORMER
GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS.

2. FRENCH CITIZEN INCARCERATED OVER ONE MONTH AGO ON HEARSAY
CHARGES OF COMPLICITY REMAINS IN CUSTODY (REF A). FRENCH

EMBASSY, WHICH MOUNTED HALF-HEARTED EFFORT TO HAVE MAN RELEASED, HAS BEEN TOLD BY GPRB THAT SO MANY BENINESE ARE BEING DETAINED IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL WHEN FRENCHMAN'S CASE WILL BE DEALT WITH. FRENCH CITIZEN WAS ARRESTED FOR SENDING COMMERCIAL TELEX TO ABIDJAN CONTAINING INDUSTRIAL CODE, WHICH GPRB AUTHORITIES INTERPRETED AS "ESPIONAGE MESSAGE".

3. SITUATION IN COTONOU IS CALM, DESPITE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AND THE SOMEWHAT UNNERVING SIGHT OF BENINESE SOLDIERS TRYING TO RIDE UNSTEADY BICYCLES OR MOBYLETTES WITHOUT DROPPING THE AK-57S SLUNG OVER THEIR SHOULDERS. CONTROL CHECKPOINTS MANNED BY CIVILIANS ARE IN EVIDENCE ON A SPORADIC BASIS AND ARE USUALLY EASILY PASSABLE. TELEPHONES REMAIN CUT. SITUATION IN INTERIOR VARIES FROM DISTRICT TO DISTRICT, AS ENFORCEMENT OF NEW TRAVEL REGULATIONS (REF B) SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN LEFT TO THE DISCRETION OF THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS.

4. COMMISSION IN INQUIRY REPORT MENTIONED THAT TWO ELEMENTS OF BENINESE MILITARY, PARACOMMANDO UNIT BASED AT OUIDAH, AND PORTO-NOVO GENDARMERIE HAVE ALREADY BEEN IMPLICATED (REF D). THIS IS FIRST NEWS OF SIMILAR INSURRECTION AMONG GENDARMERIE. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT GIVEN FURTHER DETAILS, IT IS SAFE ASSUMPTION THAT PURGE OF GENDARMERIE UNDERWAY IN PORTO-NOVO. IDENTIFICATION OF THESE TWO GROUPS AS FIFTH COLUMN HELPS EXPLAIN PRESENCE OF SOLDIERS ALONG MAJOR HIGHWAY OUTSIDE COTONOU IN EARLY MORNING HOURS OF JANUARY 16 PRECEDING ATTACK.

5. EMBASSY HAS ALSO LEARNED FROM RELIABLE SOURCE THAT FORMER
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PRESIDENTS AND REGIONAL LEADERS MAGA, APITHY, AND AHOMADEGBE WERE SEIZED IN DAYS FOLLOWING COUP ATTEMPT AT THEIR MINIMUM SECURITY PRISON FARM AT AVRANKOU AND ROUGHLY DISPATCHED TO MILITARY BASE AT DAN, NORTH OF BOHICON FOR INCARCERATION. THE THREE AGING, POSSIBLY SENILE, POLITICIANS WERE EITHER SUSPECTED OF COMPLICITY OR POSSIBLE USE AS FIGUREHEADS. ONLY FORMER PRESIDENT STILL FREE IS EMBASSY LANDLORD GENERAL SOGLO, WHO HAS SUCCEEDED IN DISSOCIATING HIMSELF FROM BENIN'S POLITICS. THOMPSON

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 18-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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